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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
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INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RHMFISS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 000268

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/02/2018
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [AMGT](#) [CASC](#) [PREL](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: SITUATION REPORT: EAC DISCUSSES ZIMBABWE ELECTION
SCENARIOS

REF: A. HARARE 259 AND PREV

[B](#). HARARE 233

[C](#). HARARE 213

Classified By: JAMES D. MCGEE, AMBASSADOR, REASON 1.4 (A) (D) and (G)

[1](#). (SBU) SUMMARY: Harare EAC met on April 2 to discuss scenarios that could ensue once election results are announced. DCM chaired the meeting, which was attended by RSO, RPOL, POL, PAS, CONS, AID, DAO, MGT, and CDC. The EAC considered a runoff the most probable outcome at the moment, but acknowledged continued uncertainty. The EAC reviewed tripwires and reactions to various scenarios. The EAC recommended to the Ambassador that the Embassy maintain its current posture of conducting normal business while maintaining heightened awareness. The Ambassador concurred. END SUMMARY.

[2](#). (SBU) RSO began the meeting by reviewing current security precautions in effect. These include:

- RSO will continue its patrols of the city and high density areas in order to provide an early warning of security force deployments, large gatherings and other disturbances.
- Embassy employees should remain vigilant and continue to have their radios on and with them at all times.
- Embassy employees should utilize extreme caution when traveling locally, and should avoid and report any large gatherings of people, police or other unusual activity or disturbances.
- MREs and water have been moved from the warehouse and staged at the assembly areas.
- All Embassy GOV,s will be kept fully fueled. Employees were also instructed to keep their vehicles at least half full.
- Embassy employees were reminded to continue to conserve water.
- Employees were reminded to carry their diplomatic card with them at all times.
- Clearance for non-official travel inside Zimbabwe will continue to be on a case-by-case basis and cleared by the RSO and Front Office.
- Post will continue to strictly review country clearance requests.

The EAC agreed that these should be continued. RSO will reissue the security notice advising employees to maintain heightened vigilance.

[3](#). (C) The EAC discussed three election scenarios, in each case considering risks, timing, tripwires, precautions and

responses. In addition to the steps below, Post would issue appropriate security notices and warden messages in each case.

SCENARIO I:

Despite the existence of compelling evidence to the contrary, President Mugabe declares that he won the March 29 election. The EAC considered this possible.

Risk A:

Opposition protests break out and security forces react, provoking violence. Embassy employees or Amcits risk getting caught in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Timing: Spontaneous, greatest immediately after announcement.

Tripwires: Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) announcement of Mugabe victory, increased security force deployment, large groups sighted in streets

Reaction: Upon learning of a ZEC announcement of Mugabe's victory, Embassy immediately cuts back to limited operations, with essential functions continuing but other employees told to stay at home. All employees are advised to stay home in the evenings. Closure of CDC and Public Affairs Section, which are on prime demonstration routes. RSO patrols and provides further advice on security as incidents unfold. Suspension of country clearance for TDY visitors.

Further considerations: The EAC would remain attentive to how the situation develops and consider further steps, such as drawdown, if the breakdown in order is sustained and widespread.

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Risk B:

Mugabe purges elements of ZANU-PF considered disloyal and ZANU on ZANU violence breaks out. Embassy employees or Amcits risk getting caught in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Timing: Within weeks.

Tripwires: Open source reporting, intel.

Reaction: Heightened awareness, with other responses depending on the situation. Such outbreaks are likely to be localized but could escalate if those being purged are able to muster support.

Risk C:

Mugabe blames Western interference for his near-defeat and retaliates against Western Embassies and interests. Post thinks it is highly unlikely that this would include unleashing violent protests against Embassies or Western companies, but cannot entirely rule it out.

Timing: Any time after consolidation of power--likely months.

Tripwires: Increasingly virulent anti-western rhetoric, declarations that Western diplomats are PNG, reduced cooperation on security and other matters.

Reaction: Depending on the situation, drawdown.

SCENARIO II:

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission declares that Morgan Tsvangirai won the March 29 election. The EAC considered

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this unlikely.

Risk:

Security forces mount a coup.

Timing: First 48 hours.

Tripwires: Unit movements, intel reporting.

Reaction: Standfast, temporarily suspend Embassy operations, consider drawdown depending on developments.

Other risks: The EAC also considered the risk of violent reactions to opposition celebrations or of ZANU-PF retaliation against Western interests. Neither was thought to pose a significant risk to Embassy employees or Amcits, though all would be advised to use caution during the period when celebrations occur.

SCENARIO III:

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission declares that no candidate won a majority and Tsvangirai and Mugabe will face each other in a runoff. The EAC believes this is currently the most likely scenario.

Risk A:

ZANU-PF employs violence and intimidation throughout the country to assure itself of victory. Americans and Embassy employees risk getting caught in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Timing: 21 days or 90 days (SEPTEL).

Tripwires: Reports of violence from opposition activists and NGOs, government refusal to accredit independent observers for the runoff election.

Reactions: Evaluate all in-country travel; approve only if mission critical or low risk. Screen country clearance requests, deferring nonessential visits. Evaluate whether and where Embassy election observers can safely deploy.

Risk B:

Mugabe blames Western interference for his near-defeat and retaliates against Western Embassies and interests.

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See above, Scenario I, Risk C.

Risk C:

Security forces mount a coup.

See above, Scenario II, Risk A.

Risk D:

ZANU on ZANU violence or MDC-ZANU clashes break out.

See above, Scenario I, Risk B.

SCENARIO IV:

A Government of National Unity is formed as a result of negotiations and/or Mugabe's resignation is negotiated. The EAC considered this very unlikely.

Risk: The EAC considered that this scenario posed a low to negligible risk.

14. (SBU) The EAC considered that pending an announcement by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, the Mission's current

security posture is appropriate. The Ambassador concurred.

MCCEE